

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The City of Alameda is seeking to manage and direct the redevelopment of properties in the North Park Street planning area through the adoption of amendments to the City's Municipal Code and Zoning Ordinance. The proposed North Park Street Regulating Code (the "Project") defines the City's planning and development standards and requirements policies for a specific geographic area, the North Park Street planning area [Gateway District planning area], to guide redevelopment of the area consistent with the City of Alameda General Plan and prevailing community values and priorities. The North Park Street Regulating Code is available for review at <http://www.cityofalamedaca.gov/City-Hall/Community-Development>.

B. REGIONAL LOCATION AND SETTING

1. LOCATION

The Park Street Regulating Code establishes the zoning requirements for an area within the eastern portion of the City of Alameda generally bounded by Oakland Estuary to the north, Oak Street to the west, Lincoln Avenue to the south and Tilden Way to the east. The City of Alameda is located 12 miles east of San Francisco and separated from the City of Oakland by an estuary. Alameda contains 12.4 square miles of land area. Approximately 10.1 square miles of the City are moderately dense and largely developed, although there are opportunities for redevelopment in the older industrial areas along the Northern Waterfront and on the former military installations at the western end of the city. The community is well known for its quiet residential neighborhoods, tree-lined streets, and graceful Victorian architecture. Alameda's proximity to San Francisco and Oakland, its location on the water, and the attractiveness of its housing stock and neighborhoods make it a desirable place to live and work. Alameda's population is approximately 75,000. Alameda has a total of approximately 32,000 housing units.

2. AREA CHARACTERISTICS

The North Park Street Regulating Code area consists of a diverse range of existing land uses, including Alameda's former "auto row", commercial retail uses, office uses, restaurants, marinas, light industrial, trucking, warehouse commercial, and residential use.

The planning area is surrounded by a variety of land uses. To the east and west of the planning area, the land uses are primarily residential. To the south, along Park Street, commercial retail uses are the

primary land use. To the southeast of the plan area, civic uses predominate, such as Police Headquarters, the Main Library and City Hall.

Park Street and the Park Street Bridge and Tilden Way and the Miller Sweeney Bridge provide the primary access to the larger region from the North Park Street plan area. The primary east west traffic routes are Clement Street, Buena Vista, and Lincoln Avenue, all of which provide access across the City of Alameda to Constitution Avenue, Webster Street, and the Webster and Posey Tubes. Clement and Blanding Avenue within the plan area are designated Truck Routes.

The North Park Street plan area includes six blocks of the Park Street commercial district, which was previously occupied by Alameda's "Auto Row". During the period from 2005 to 2010, all of the new car dealerships either left Alameda for new freeway-oriented locations in other cities or closed due to the recession. Several of these sites are currently vacant and others have been re-occupied with used automobile dealerships, auto rental businesses, and in one case a scooter dealership. Many of the adjacent parcels on the side streets and a few of the parcels facing Park Street continue to be occupied by automobile repair and auto parts stores.

The Park Street commercial properties are all designated Community Commercial in the City of Alameda General Plan. The adjacent blocks within the plan area are generally designated Medium Density Residential in the City of Alameda General Plan. The Medium Density Residential blocks to the west of Park Street generally include a mix of residential uses, office uses, and neighborhood services. The Medium Density Residential Blocks to the east of Park Street also include a variety of uses, but the predominate use is residential. The lands adjacent to the Oakland Estuary are occupied by a variety of commercial, industrial, and maritime uses.

C. NORTH PARK STREET REGULATING CODE

The Draft North Park Street Regulation Code is a new zoning code for the plan area. It is designed to implement the policies of the City of Alameda General Plan and the vision for development and reuse of the area established by the 2009 "Gateway District Strategic Plan".

The North Park Street Regulating Code includes and establishes:

- Sub district zones.
- District regulations for each sub district zone, including regulations regarding building placement, building height, building length, frontage coverage, building types, and frontage types.
- Permitted and conditionally permitted uses for each zone.
- Design Guidelines including guidelines for landscaping and open space, parking, fuel stations, architectural design standards, architectural style guidelines, and guidelines for rehabilitation and restoration.

As described in the Gateway District Strategic Plan, the regulating code is designed to assist the City and community achieve the following goals for the area:

- Use the Plan Area and gateway to enhance Alameda’s identity.
- Attract new investment appropriate to the envisioned character of the district.
- Create attractive and pedestrian-oriented streetscapes and public spaces throughout the district.
- Remedy the auto-oriented feeling throughout the district.
- Ensure that the new and existing development reinforce the desired look and feel of the district, and complement the City’s historic buildings.

Examples of how the draft Code achieves some of the above goals include:

- The code would replace the existing General Industrial (M-2), Intermediate Industrial (M-1) and Commercial Manufacturing (C-M) zoning that currently covers approximately half of the land area in the district with new zoning designations to allow mixed use, pedestrian oriented, commercial uses on Park Street and residential and residential mixed used development on the blocks behind Park Street.
- A number of residential properties that are non-conforming uses under the existing zoned (manufacturing use) would be rezoned to residential use and would become conforming uses.
- The 100-foot height limit that covers all of Park Street and much of the rest of the plan area would be replaced with a 30-foot height limit in the residential areas and a 50 foot height limit on Park Street.
- The regulating code establishes a “form based” set of regulations, which ensures that new buildings are sited and designed in a manner that supports the “desired look and feel” of the district as articulated by the public through Gateway visioning process.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the proposed action are to:

- Update the zoning code for the plan area to conform with General Plan objectives, goals, and policies.
- Adopt Zoning Ordinance amendments, standards and requirements to guide future development consistent with the community’s vision as articulated by the General Plan and Gateway Strategic Plan.
- Manage the redevelopment of private sites to create an active, pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented mixed-use environment.
- Provide certainty for the community, property owners and future investors in the area by providing clear, form based regulations for the plan area.
- Encourage economically viable redevelopment that is sensitive to existing neighborhoods and the historic character of the area.